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CHURCH
ORGANIZATION
AND WORK



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Church

Organization

and Work

By S. M. Brown

With Introduction

By R. K. Maiden

**Western Baptist Publishing Company,
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A FOREWORD.

We have had of late years very much concerning the organization and work of classes of church members, but very little concerning the organization and work of the church itself. It seems to the author of this brief work that much time and thought have been, in a manner, wasted, by losing sight of the church itself as the one only necessary local organization for the prosecution of every phase of Christian activity, and the employment of every gift belonging to the churches. I therefore present this plain treatise upon Church Organization and Work, with the hope and prayer that it may be blessed of God to the simplifying of what has come to be a rather complex and perplexing question.

S. M. BROWN.

Kansas City, Mo., December, 1910.

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INTRODUCTION.

Partly before his death, and altogether before his ascension, Christ provided for the doing of what he wished to have done in the world during all the period between his ascension and his second coming. The gospel was to be preached to all the world, and an advancing, constructive work of the Kingdom carried on. For the perpetuation and consummation of his work he, of course, planned wisely. Any other conclusion would be an indictment of his wisdom. We must think of him as having before him, in the making of his plan, all ages, all places and all conditions. And we cannot think of him as ordaining and projecting a plan that was not in the highest degree efficient and adequate. The one hope of success, then, in the work of evangelizing the world and making the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, is for Christ's people to work on the line of his plan.

Christ's plan was the simple New Testament church. He made no other plan. He needs no other. He instituted, equipped and commissioned the church to be his executive on earth till he came again. It is his plan that he shall be made known to the world through his church.

We are passing through a period of adventure, invention and experiment in relation to means for the

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bringing in of the Kingdom. Extra scriptural and extra church organizations and movements abound in great profusion and bewildering confusion. In the meantime the Kingdom of God is not advancing by leaps and bounds. And we are beginning to see that there is a noise of religious machinery that is out of all proportion to the grist that is being ground. A few here and there are rubbing the dust, stirred up by passing movements, out of their eyes and are seeing that all of this hurrahing and running to and fro is at the expense of the dignity, integrity and efficiency of the churches; that the churches have been neglected, discounted, deserted and impoverished by the devotion of their members to organizations and movements which have been attempting to do the work of the churches. We are learning, too, that a church cannot be organized by organizing classes and fragments of it into different squads for the doing of this and that. Whatever impairs the integrity of a church injures both the church and the cause the church is meant to serve. Many are slow to learn that the wise and right thing to do is to bring to bear the force of the coherent, compact whole upon every item and phase of work.

Every human duty is included in the obligations imposed by church membership. Every good thing a church member can do in this world for the promotion of the Kingdom of God, he can do, and ought to do, as a church member.

The author of this little book goes in the face

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of much of current thought and practice. His plea for a transfer of emphasis seems to be timely and well grounded. He seems to have the advantage over any contrary views of putting emphasis where the Scriptures put it. The reader will find refreshing diversion in a sober, reverent, judicious discussion of the churches, as set over against extra church organizations and movements. The prediction is ventured that the circulation of this vigorous book will have a most wholesome effect upon the church life of our time. This time it is our friend and not our "enemy" who has written "a book."

ROBERT KING MAIDEN.

Church Organization and Work

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH DEFINED.

..The word *ecclesia*, which is the Greek word translated "church," in our English New Testament, means, primarily, a congregation, an assembly, called out. As used in the New Testament, the word almost invariably refers to a local congregation of baptized believers in Christ, who assemble for the purpose of the worship of God; for preaching and teaching His Word, and for the administration of the ordinances of the gospel. The few exceptions in the use of the term, are where it is used in a generic sense, or in an accommodated sense; but nowhere is the idea of organization implied, except where the word is used to designate a local assembly. There is no

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warrant, in the scriptural use of the term, for calling a hierarchy, a presbytery, a sect, or the aggregate of the local assemblies in a given territory, the church, or a church. Plainly the term *ecclesia* as used in the New Testament, when in any sense referring to an organization, invariably signifies a local congregation. Let it be understood, therefore, that when we speak of church organization and work, a local congregation or assembly of believers in Christ is meant.

Much confusion among Christians has arisen on account of a corrupted usage of the term. The term church is used to signify a meeting house, a building; it is used to designate the aggregate of all true believers in Christ; it is used with reference to a denomination throughout the world, or in a given country, and so on. This corrupt and improper use of the term grew out of heretical and unscriptural views of the nature of the church, and so it fits into the language of those who have adopted such unscriptural views. Baptists should therefore stand guard over, and contend for, that scriptural use of the term which

contributes to right views of the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject.

If, for instance, Baptists speak of the aggregate of all believers in Christ, they should never denominate such aggregate the church of Christ. If they refer to the separate denominations as composing one great body, it should never be denominated the church. The prevailing New Testament meaning of the term church should be insisted upon by Baptists, because a scriptural use of the term becomes a most effective teaching concerning the scriptural view of the term, and is at once a protest against the error into which the Christian world has fallen.

The word *ecclesia* appears in the New Testament at least thirty-three times in the singular, and at least seventeen times in the plural number, where reference is clearly to a local congregation, in a particular place; while the word is used eleven times in the singular, and eighteen times in the plural number, where the local idea is perfectly clear, and yet no particular assembly is meant. Then there are numerous other passages where only a local congre-

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gation can possibly be spoken of, whereas there are very few instances where the term could possibly have been used in a larger sense; but in each of these there is clearly present the idea of an assembly on earth or in heaven.

So we take it that the meaning that all Christians should attach to the term is a local congregation of believers in Christ, who assemble for worship and service.

It should be stated here, that much of the confusion that has arisen in regard to the meaning of the word *ecclesia*, is on account of the fact that we have translated it by the word church, which is derived from the Scotch *kirk* and from the German *kirche*; and these in turn were perhaps derived from the Greek *kuriakon*, which originally signified a house of God. So we call a meeting house a church. Since, however, we have translated *ecclesia* by this word, we should avoid, as far as possible, the ambiguous use of it. In all our speaking and writing, distinction should be made between the *Kingdom* and the *churches*. Every saved person is in the Kingdom, but only those who have made public profes-

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sion of faith in Christ in baptism, and who have entered into covenant fellowship with each other, are members of the churches.

CHAPTER II.

INSTITUTION OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

The church is peculiar to the gospel dispensation. The church of Christ is not a continuation of anything Jewish, except as it was foreshadowed by certain symbolisms. The first church was not established on the day of Pentecost, as some claim; for we are plainly told that those who, on that occasion, gladly received the word and were baptized, were "added unto them"; that is, to some institution, body, or assembly, which had a previous existence. The language is: Acts 2:41—"They, then, that received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." Added unto whom? Why, plainly, unto "the eleven." If you will turn back in this same chapter to the fourteenth verse, you will read: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice

and spake unto them, saying," and so on. "With the eleven," "and there were added unto them," added unto whom? Why, unto the eleven disciples. Who constituted these eleven disciples an assembly to which these converts were added? Now, if we turn to Luke 6:12 we read: "And it came to pass in these days that He went out into the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God, and when it was day He called His disciples; and He chose from them twelve, whom also He named apostles." Then follow the names of these men. In the seventeenth verse of the same chapter we read: "And He came down with them (the twelve), and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of His disciples." Here Jesus stands with the twelve. He has chosen them from a multitude of His disciples, and from that day it is "Jesus and the twelve." He joined these men together in a special relation to each other which did not exist among the other disciples. They were an organization; they had a common treasury, and a common treasurer. It is true they were apostles, but they were disciples also,

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and they composed the first church. These men were ever thereafter with Jesus. They followed Him; they learned from His blessed lips the great lessons of truth and wisdom which they were to propagate after His death, burial and resurrection. His memorable prayer, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John, was made for them. After the departure of Judas the traitor, it was with the eleven He instituted the Lord's Supper; and on that occasion He said to them, "But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." Here the Lord was beginning to turn over the management of the affairs of His kingdom on earth to this little company of men whom he had called out from the other disciples. He gives them this ordinance of His church.

Again, after His crucifixion, burial and resurrection, and after His appearance to different individuals, establishing His resurrection by many infallible proofs, He

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meets these eleven disciples, according to a previous appointment, and gives to them, in their collective and representative capacity, His Great Commission to preach the gospel to the whole creation; to baptize all who believe, and to teach them to observe whatsoever He had commanded. The very terms of this Commission plainly show that the Lord could not have intended it to apply to these men as individuals, considered either as disciples or apostles. "Go ye into *all the world*." "Preach the gospel to the *whole creation*." "Lo I am with you *always, even unto the end of the age*." Now it was plainly impossible for these men, in any individual capacity whatsoever, to have complied with this command. There is, therefore, no other conclusion possible, except that our Lord addressed these men collectively, as representing an organization, or institution, which was intended to be perpetual, and which, in an organized capacity, could "go into all the world . . . preach the gospel to the whole creation," and to which was given the promise of His abiding presence to the "end of the age."

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This was the first church. It was constituted by Him who said, "I will build my church." It was to this church that the people were "added" on the day of Pentecost; and it was to this first church in its representative capacity, that the commission to preach, teach, and baptize, was given.

But these men were not only disciples; they were also inspired apostles; and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they completed the organization of the church by adding the office of deacon; and furnished it with many divinely inspired epistles, setting forth the doctrines and practices which were to distinguish His churches in all generations.

Herein is seen the wisdom of Jesus. If He had not chosen these men and related them to each other in this sacred fellowship and relationship, the probability would plainly seem to be, that, when the disjointed, unorganized multitude of His disciples passed away, His name and cause would have perished from the earth. Jesus Himself constituted the first church, which became the Jerusalem church, and

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which could refer to the eleven faithful disciples as its charter members. Paul, in writing his epistle to the Ephesians, says (Eph. 2:19, 20) : "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom also ye are builded together, for a habitation of God in the Spirit." Here reference is made to the several local churches, resting upon the apostles as the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. "Each several building" signifies each several local organization, and these have as their beginning the apostolic church, and for their complete direction the apostolic teaching. So it is said they are "built upon the apostles."

CHAPTER III.

THE OFFICERS.

The New Testament church seems to have two, and only two, officers: that of *bishop* or pastor, and *deacon*. The former of these is designated by several different terms, all of which signify the same office. The probability is that one of these terms used most commonly to designate this office, the term *Elder*, was sometimes used to designate any and all ordained persons in the churches. This fact explains the matter of a plurality of Elders in some of the New Testament churches. There were also certain other persons designated, who, by some, have been considered as officers of the church; but a careful examination of the entire teaching of the New Testament plainly shows that these two, *bishop* or pastor, and *deacon*, were the only permanent officials in the church. The others

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referred to, such as *teachers, helps, governments, prophets, etc.*, were rather "gifts" belonging to the churches than permanent officials in the church organization. This fact more clearly appears if we consider that, in all the epistles, especially the pastoral epistles of Timothy and Titus, we have pointed out especially the qualifications only of *bishop* and *deacon*, as if they were to be considered as the only officers of the churches. The office of *bishop* or pastor seems to have special reference to the spiritual, while that of the deacon has reference to the temporal or business side of the life of the churches. These officers were elected by the vote of the membership of the churches, and there is no intimation that the tenure of office was other than permanent, during life or good behavior.

The term *bishop* means overseer, and the term *pastor* means shepherd. The term *deacon* means servant.

The qualifications of these officers are clearly set forth in the New Testament Scriptures. In 1 Timothy 3:1-11, we read: "Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh

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the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious; no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?), not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have good testimony from them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." "Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. . . . Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good

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standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In Titus 1:5-10, we read: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly; For the bishop must be blameless as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality; a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers."

Here we have the recognition of only two officials, *bishop* and *deacon*. Their qualifications have special reference to their duties, which are to be considered in later chapters in this book.

CHAPTER IV.

PASTOR AND DEACONS.

The offices of pastor and deacon are reciprocal. The occasion of the origination of the office of deacon indicates something of this relation. That the office of deacon was created in the Jerusalem church, as recorded in Acts 6, will, I suppose, be generally accepted. The account is as follows: "Now in these days when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations; And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God and serve tables. Look ye out, therefore, brethren from among you, seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in

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prayer and in the ministry of the Word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (then follow the names of six others), whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands upon them."

That this was really the origination of the office of deacon, appears from the following considerations:

1. The necessity which led to the appointment of these men was of a nature to be perpetual.

2. The ceremony of laying on of the hands of the apostles must have been for the purpose of inducting them into office—ordination—and not to the end that they might receive the Holy Spirit, as the filling of the Spirit was made a necessary previous qualification in the selection of these men.

3. In the later history of the churches, we have clearly pointed out the office of deacon; and there seems to be no other occasion which could possibly be referred to as the institution of the office.

4. The clearly defined qualifications of

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the deacons, as set forth in the epistles, exactly correspond to the qualifications of the seven men mentioned in this sixth chapter of the Acts.

From these considerations we conclude that the generally accepted opinion that we have recorded here the institution of the office of deacon, is the correct one.

These seven men were chosen to "this business" in order to relieve the ministers of the Word from temporal cares, so that they might devote themselves entirely to the preaching of the Word, and to prayer. So that it seems clear that, while the pastor or *bishop* is charged with preaching and leading the flock, taking a general oversight and leadership of the entire work, the *deacons* are intended to have charge of the temporal affairs of the church ("this business"), so that the preacher's hands may be untied. Clearly the two offices shade into each other; and each partakes, in a measure, of the work of the other. The pastor is the leader and teacher of the whole flock; and in this teaching is included all that portion of the Word which has reference to the business

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side of the churches' life, while the work of the deacon in "serving" the church and aiding the pastor, necessarily involves the spiritual as well as the financial aspect of the work.

CHAPTER V.

THE OBJECT OF THE CHURCH.

Every organization or society is supposed to have an object or purpose which calls for and justifies its existence. What, then, is the purpose of the churches as organizations?

The Great Commission which our Lord gave to the eleven disciples, who composed the first church, sets out completely and distinctly this object, this purpose. The following is the Commission as given by Matthew 28:16-20:

“But the eleven disciples went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father

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and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

As given by Mark 16:15, 16, the Commission is as follows: "And He said unto them: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

From these last great words of our Lord to His eleven disciples, we conclude that the great object or purpose of His churches, as organizations and institutions in the world, is to preach and teach the great and blessed truth of His Word, and to administer the ordinances of the gospel.

It is not primarily to "clothe the naked and feed the hungry." These blessed deeds of commiseration, while displaying the glorious fruits of the gospel, are incidental to the one great purpose of the churches.

Nor is it primarily to educate the world

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along secular lines, but so to preach the gospel and teach the Bible as to bring all education under the influence and power of Christ's Kingdom.

Nor yet do the churches exist to enact and execute laws for the purposes of human government, but so to imbue the general public with the principles of the Kingdom of Christ by preaching, living, and teaching His Word, as to place the righteous in places of political influence and power.

Nor is it any part of the business of the churches to provide social entertainment and amusement for the people; and they never undertake it, except to their own hurt. The social side of human life belongs to the functions of the home and family, and society in general, the foundation of which should be the Christian home. It is the purpose of the churches so to preach the gospel, and so to teach all those biblical precepts concerning the duty and obligations of parents to children, and children to parents, and neighbor to neighbor, as to correct all the evils of human society.

Let it always be understood that the

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churches exist as preaching and teaching societies; and let it always be remembered that the power of their teaching and preaching will depend largely upon the sacredness and reverence with which the people generally regard the churches and their work. To make the house of God a place for social rendezvous, or athletics, or a semi-business affair, where bazaars, rummage sales, spelling bees, theatrical performances, bowling alleys, etc., occupy prominent places, is so to secularize and degrade the preaching and teaching of the great truths of the gospel as to rob them of their greatest effectiveness. The churches cannot, were not intended to, perform the functions and do the work of either the state, the home, the family, or society. Their work of preaching and teaching the Word of God sustains a direct relation to all these institutions; and the power of their preaching and teaching to affect all these for good will depend largely upon their isolation from them, in a way, and their maintenance of reverence for even the places where they meet for the solemn worship of a holy Savior. That churches

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should include in their ministrations all those tender and beautiful charities, such as caring for the sick, the aged, the orphan and the poor, is freely admitted; but, like their Savior and Head, they should always make these ministrations subservient to the one great purpose of proclaiming the gospel of salvation from sin, which creates conditions of human society that prevent, as well as cure, the ills, of human life.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH AND GENERAL BODIES.

The New Testament gives us only one organization for the entire work of Christ's Kingdom on earth; that is, the local-church. Since, in all religious work, the principle of perfect freedom, or voluntariness, must obtain everywhere, the local church is the only organization possessing authority, which is necessary or possible. All co-operative bodies are created for the mutual edification and co-operation of the churches; and no legislative or disciplinary power is claimed by them. In the local church there is recognized the perfect equality of the members, in all matters left to the churches to decide. The relation of the local church, therefore, to all general bodies, is purely voluntary, the general body possessing as its only prerogative the power of receiving for, or dismissing churches from, membership.

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The object or purpose of the churches being to *preach the gospel to the whole creation*, and to teach *all nations*, plainly lays upon each church the duty and obligation to co-operate with other churches in the great work of carrying out the world-wide Commission given to them by their risen Lord. The inability of any local church to accomplish all that is involved in the Commission, plainly lays upon each and every one the obligation to form such co-operative alliances with sister organizations as will contribute the most possible toward the accomplishment of the great purpose of its existence. This plan of the co-operation of the churches in general work, has the sanction of the New Testament Scriptures. The poor saints in Jerusalem were aided by a co-operative movement among the early churches; and the apostle Paul, the first great missionary, was supported by the combined offerings of several churches. He said to the Corinthian brethren, 2 Corinthians 11:8, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you." This plainly shows that the great mis-

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sionary received a wage, and that that wage was provided by the co-operation of several churches. This voluntary co-operation of the churches in missionary enterprise, not only does not interfere with the principle of the independence of the local church, but is, by both the principle of expediency and Scripture precedent and example, demanded. It should be kept in mind that, when we speak of the independence of the local church, we do not mean that the church is to exercise its independence to that extent that it disregards the command of its Lord, which is the law of its being. The Commission given to the local church is to "preach the gospel to the whole creation"; and plainly no one local church can do this, except as it co-operates with its sister churches; therefore, local churches are not free to refuse to enter into that fellowship of work with others, which furnishes the only method by which they can possibly perform the work that has been given them to do. Especially is this true since we have the example of such co-operation among the churches which

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were under the care of the inspired apostles themselves.

It ought to go without saying, that all general bodies among Baptists should be the creatures of, and amenable to, the churches that form them. They have no reason for their existence, except as they carry out the wishes of the people or God, as expressed through the messengers of the churches. The disregard of this principle has called forth some righteous criticism of the work of our general bodies. The answer that all our co-operative bodies should preserve for themselves, to make to their critics, is: *We are the messengers of the churches, appointed to carry out the will of the churches with whom is lodged all ecclesiastical authority on earth.* Having won for themselves the right to make such an answer, they need not fear.

CHAPTER VII.

UNITY OF ORGANIZATION.

The church itself is the only necessary local organization for each and every class of its members, and for the prosecution of every phase of its work. When one becomes a member of the church, he takes upon himself the highest and mightiest obligation possible, to do every duty that devolves upon a Christian. To undertake to supplement this obligation by seeking to enroll him in some internal organization, in or about the church, is not only dishonoring to the church, but is very unwise. The claims of the divine institution, or organization, into the membership of which one was inducted by the solemn ordinance of baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are more easily pressed home to the conscience of a converted person than possibly could be the claims of some extra-scriptural society. Is not the

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church itself for the young and the old; for men and for women? Is not the church itself a sufficient organization to have and conduct a Bible study and teaching service, on Sunday morning? Is not the church itself a good missionary society for both men and women and young people? Cannot the church itself originate and conduct a service for the enlistment and training of its young people? Why have a separate organization for different classes of church members, and a separate organization for the prosecution of each separate feature of the churches' work? Why not make all these services, services of the church?—a service for teaching and studying the Book; a service for preaching; a service for prayer; a service in the interest of the work of women; a service for the training and enlistment of young people. The fact is, that, in all the life and work of the church, each class of persons needs every other class, and should, by intimate association in all the services of the Lord's house, cultivate interest in, and love for, every other class. (1 Cor. 12:12): "For as the body is one, and

hath many members, and all the members of the body being many are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member is hon-

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ored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."

This is as much as to say that the old need the young, and the young need the old; the men need the women, and the women need the men; the laymen need the preacher, and the preacher needs the laymen. The entire membership is a body; and the body without a hand, or a foot, or an eye, or an ear, is maimed and crippled. The thought and prayer of every member of the church should be centered on the work of the men, and the work of the women, on the work of the old, and the work of the young—on Bible study, on missions, on Christian beneficence, on prayer and devotion, on praise and thanksgiving—that whatever is undertaken may have the best strength of a whole healthy body; that what is to be suffered, may be shared by all.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAUNCHING THE WORK.

1. *The Sunday School.*

Let there be, first of all, the proper conception of what the Sunday School should be. It is not an organization: it is the church gathered on Sunday to study and teach the Word of God. It is a service of the church, and should no more be thought of as an organization, than is the preaching service. The church should, in regular business session, select a superintendent, and he, in connection with the pastor and deacons, should select teachers; and monthly reports of the work of the Sunday School should be made at the regular business session of the church. Any other helps for the Sunday School, such as secretary, treasurer, and so on, should be selected by the church. Great harm has come to the cause, by making the Sunday School an organization in itself.

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(a) It displaces the responsibility for the Sunday School, and, in a way, furnishes an excuse for members of the church taking no part in the work.

(b) It contributes to the notion that the Sunday School is for children, and not for all classes.

(c) It relieves the church of the responsibility for what is taught in the Sunday School, which is really of as much importance as what is taught in the pulpit.

(d) It introduces division and dissension in the work, while the Sunday School may be going one way and the church another.

(e) It divorces the Bible-study service from the preaching service, and tends to make a different congregation for each. Since the Sunday School is one thing and the church another thing, the Sunday School holds its service in the morning, and takes its departure; and then the church holds its service, and departs. This custom has raised the question in the minds of many thoughtful persons, as to whether the Sunday School has done more harm than good; and if the result is to be

the education of our children, and young people, into the habit of going away from the preaching service, the question is not without foundation.

The only remedy for this condition, is to make the Sunday School one of the regular services of the church, and to disabuse the mind of the general public of the notion that Sunday School is especially for children, and a separate thing from the church. It is my deliberate opinion that, if our children are to attend only one service on Sunday, it would better be the preaching service than the Sunday School. My reasons for this opinion are:

(a) The preacher, as a rule, is a better teacher than any Sunday School teacher. It is presumed that he has made the Word of God his special study, and as a rule he has done so. He can set the truth before all classes of people, so as to win acceptance for it, far better than the Sunday School teacher can do.

(b) The preacher, if he be the right kind, is under a special call of God to preach and to teach His Word; and he

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therefore possesses an unction that the Sunday School teacher does not possess.

(c) As a rule the sermon possesses a power of exhortation and appeal that is not present in the Sunday School teaching. Much of the time of the teacher is necessarily taken up with matters of history, geography, habits, etc., and as a rule he has only thirty minutes before his class.

If any one will take the pains to investigate as I have done, he will find that at least ninety per cent of all truly converted persons will say that they were brought to a decision for Christ, not through the Sunday School, but through the preaching of some man called of God to the ministry of the Word. This is not to depreciate the teaching service of the church, but it is to say that, as a rule, the Sunday School scholar who attends only the Sunday School service, will grow out of the Sunday School, and drift away from the church, entirely; and only those, as a rule, who attend the preaching services, become Christians.

After all this is said, the Sunday School, the Bible-teaching service, is one of the

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most important services of the church. Of those who are brought to confess Christ, and unite with the churches, by far the larger number are those who have attended the Sunday School. And in these busy days, about the only consecutive studying of the Scriptures done, is that which we do in connection with the Sunday School.

2. *The work of women.*

There is always study and work in which women only can engage. Many of them have time between their household duties that they can devote to study, devotion and service, which their brethren do not have. Each church should have a committee of, say, five of the most spiritual and discrete sisters in the church, who are appointed to take the lead in these matters. Their work should be considered by the whole church, and reports of their doings should be made to the church. In this way they can do all that is proposed by a separate organization. Let it be understood that by virtue of her membership in the church, every woman is to take a lively interest in the special work of the sisters. It seems

to me, however, that it would conserve the very best interests of the churches, and be the occasion of far less expense to the denomination, if women would be contented to make all their contributions through the church itself, as do other members; through the same channels, and to the same objects, through which, and to which, the brethren contribute.

3. *The training of young people.*

In much the same way, any special work for the enlistment and training of the young people should be done. A committee selected by the church should have charge of the work and report to the church.

But after all this is said, it remains a fact that, in almost all, if not quite all, of the devotion, study, and work of the churches, all classes of members should meet together, pray together, study together, and work together. The teaching of the Scriptures is all on the side of this view, and after all, it is well not to proceed in any direction where the way is not clearly pointed out by the revealed will of God.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WORK OF THE PASTOR.

The burden of New Testament teaching is all on the side of the permanency of the pastoral office. There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that the office of *bishop*, or pastor, was to be less permanent than that of the deacon. The unsettled condition of pastors, with the custom of remaining only a while in a place, furnishes the occasion for much that is hurtful to the cause. No pastor is prepared to do his best work, until he has so rooted himself down in the church, and in the community, as to make it seem next to impossible for him to move. The short pastorate is, as a rule, a detriment to the church and an injustice to the preacher. It cultivates a spirit of restlessness in the membership. There are almost always certain persons in every church who are never satisfied, but are always wanting a change—

something new. The custom of frequent change of pastors affords this restless class a fine opportunity to get in their revolutionary work.

Then again, the faithful preacher of the whole gospel is sure to give offense to worldly and delinquent members. These become restless under the faithful admonitions of the loyal minister of the Word, and go to work to unsettle the pastor, even if they undo the man of God.

The custom works a hardship upon the pastor. A preacher needs a home. He needs some of the comforts of life. He makes friends who are near and dear to him. He does not enjoy the severing of these ties. He learns to love the church over which he presides. It becomes a part of him. It is his in a sense in which no other member possesses it. If he is a faithful shepherd, he has entered into the joys and sorrows of his people. It is like tearing asunder his very heart-strings to give up the people for whom he has prayed, over whom he has wept, and for whose salvation he has laid down his life. Frequent changes of pas-

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tor is equally detrimental to the church. The pastor finds difficulties in the church. He at once begins to look for another field. He does not seem to realize that it is his duty to remain, and settle, and overcome these difficulties. The salary is not sufficient. The pastor should strive, through the deacons of the church, to increase the salary. If the salary is too small for him, it will probably be too small for the next man. No pastor ought to leave his field on account of these things, until he finds that there is no way to remedy such adverse conditions.

The pastor is especially charged with the spiritual affairs of the church. He should press home upon the membership all the teaching of the Scriptures upon finances, which will fix the responsibility and management of that part of the work upon the deacons. He cannot, without weakening his ministry, take the lead in these matters. This is the work of the deacons.

The preacher's great work is to *preach*. The notion that he is to put in his time attending to all the visiting of the sick and looking after the needs of the poor, is

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wrong. This, as we shall see later, is largely the work of the deacon. (1 Tim. 4:13): "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (Acts 6:2): "It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God and serve tables. Look ye out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word."

These Scriptures plainly show us that the great work of the preacher is to *preach*, and to *teach* the Word. By the introduction of unscriptural organizations and methods of work into the churches of Christ, the office of the ministry, and the

work of preaching and teaching by the called, ordained minister of the gospel, have been discounted. The preacher is the great teacher of the churches. He is the *ordained* teacher. He has been examined by the church as to his Christian experience; his call to the ministry; his aptness to teach; his views of doctrine, and so on. By discounting the pastor as the authorized teacher and preacher, and thrusting forward unordained, and often unprepared and heterodox, teachers, in Sunday Schools and other departments of church work, we have added many to our churches who have no views, or wrong views, of Christian doctrine, and who become an easy prey for the errorists and false teachers of a corrupt age. The safeguard is to return to the teaching of the Scriptures, in these matters, and restore to the ordained, orthodox pulpit its chief and scriptural place and function, as the source of teaching and preaching. The pastor should be given the oversight of all the teaching in the Sunday School, in the young people's meetings. He is the head-teacher and will be held responsible for what is taught to the

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flock over which he is the shepherd—the pastor. Faithfulness to duty will lead him to lay out the work for the church, and to see that all its work is faithfully and efficiently done; but his own mission is to preach a whole gospel earnestly and faithfully.

CHAPTER X.

THE WORK OF THE DEACON.

I now come to consider what, as it seems to me, is the most important matter, just now, concerning the work of our churches.

In a previous chapter of this book I have referred to the origination of the office of deacon as recorded in Acts 6:1: "And in those days when the number of disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews, against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God and serve tables. Look ye out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word. And the saying

pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"; then follow the names of the other deacons, and the account continues—"Whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them"—ordained them to office.

All the life and work of the churches may be classed under two heads: the spiritual, and the temporal, or financial. At the head of these two departments of the churches' life and work, stand the two offices, *bishop*, or pastor, and *deacon*. The scriptural qualifications of these two officers are, to a degree, similar, for the reason that their duties shade into each other. The teaching in the pulpit, and the finances in the pew, are so directly related and interdependent, that the officer at the head of the one becomes the helper to the officer at the head of the other. The word *deacon*, Greek *diakonos*, means servant—one who helps, who ministers, especially in temporal matters.

Now it goes without saying, that a most serious weakness in all religious work is

found in the desultory, irresponsible, inefficient management of the finances of the churches. In many, if not in the majority of instances, the work of the deacon has been taken out of his hands; or, on account of his failure to perform his duty, necessity has compelled the churches to seek to have the work done by others. This important part of the Lord's work has fallen to the lot of women and young people, to temporary committees, and so on, until the financial credit of churches has been, in a manner, destroyed, and the whole name and cause so far brought into disrepute.

Again, the failure of the deacons at this point has, in part, been the cause of the adoption of expedients for the raising of money for the Lord's cause, which have been as disgraceful to the churches as they have been offensive to God. Still further, many of our good preachers have been ruined, as great preachers of the gospel, by making them financial agents to do the work that can only be efficiently done by the scriptural officers of the church, who are charged by their Lord with these matters.

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It is my deliberate opinion, after years of observation, that the lack of money for the support of every interest, institution and work, among the people of God, is not on account of the illiberality or penuriousness of the people of God, but on account of the lack of *intelligent, consecrated leadership in the individual church*. There is scarcely a church in all the land that could not be made a liberal contributor to all the interests of the Kingdom, by three to ten faithful, scripturally qualified deacons. It should be said also that, in the very nature of the case, it cannot be done in any other way. "*Movements*" will not do it; they are a mere temporary expedient. The women cannot do it. The financial agent cannot do it, for the reason that his visits are too infrequent. The pastor cannot do it, except through the deacons. The deacons, if they possess the scriptural qualifications, understand their duties, and will perform them, can do it. This is true, not in any arbitrary way, but in the very nature of the case. Women and children do not carry the purse, and men will not follow the leadership of women, any-

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way. It was not intended by the Maker that they should. "Man is the head over the woman as Christ is head over the church." Woman was created to help him; and the only way for woman to exercise her greatest influence over man, is to take her God-ordained place at his side, as his helper, and not in front of him, as his leader. We must come to realize that the financial business of the churches is, as we say, a man's job. The *Layman's Movement*, as it is called, has been made necessary by the failure of our churches at this point, and no permanent good results will follow this *movement* unless it crystallizes in emphasizing anew the office and the work of the deacon, in the churches of Christ. Those things, in all our work, which fail to recognize the churches, themselves, as the only divine institutions and fundamental organizations for the carrying forward of the work of the Kingdom, will finally fail, and they ought to fail. This is true because any doctrine or practice among the Lord's people that has not the appeal of a "thus saith the Lord" to the Christian conscience, will

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not, cannot, endure. If the pastor attempts to run the finances of the church, he will soon either compromise himself, or so secularize his ministry, and occupy his time, as to be unable to preach and apply the Word, not only to this feature, but also to every other feature of the life of the church, and so all will fail.

Distinct scriptural appeal can be made to the deacon to do this work. His qualifications, if he be a scripturally qualified deacon, point to him as the very person, of all persons, to do this work. The deacon's work combines, also, the spiritual side of church life with the financial; and this is as it should be. Giving should be an act of worship; and one who is simply and only a financial agent, will do more harm than good, by his appeals for money. The two sides of the Christian life must go along together. That deacon who has visited the membership of the church in times of sickness and financial distress, and who has, by such deeds of kindness and mercy, ingratiated himself into the good favor of the Lord's people, is the only man who ought to be sent to the brethren and sisters

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to solicit their contributions to the Lord's work. The idea of sending around a flip-pant young girl, or a beautiful, attractive woman, on account of the influence she may exercise over men, is as disgraceful as it is ineffective. Only that giving to the Lord's work which is an expression of love for God and His cause in the world, by the giver, is acceptable to our Lord, and profitable in the work and benevolence of the church.

CHAPTER XI.

CONDUCTING THE DEACON'S WORK.

We have seen that the pastor and the deacon are the officers of the church. We have spoken of the scriptural qualifications of these officers. Now, presuming that we have a scripturally qualified pastor and scripturally qualified deacons, how shall we begin to conduct the deacon's work? It would probably be a good plan for the pastor to call the deacons and their wives together, and talk over the personal condition and needs of the entire membership. Then divide the membership into groups, setting a deacon over each group. Then let it be understood that it is the duty of each deacon to ascertain, as far as possible, the financial and spiritual condition of each member of his group. If he be the man of God he ought to be, he can soon win his way into the affections of his brethren and sisters. First of all, he should consider the financial need and distress of any

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who may be poor and hard-run. He should at once report every case of sickness or financial distress among the membership, in his group, to the pastor and to the body of deacons. Such need should be supplied. He should go into these homes and comfort the people, and pray with them. In a short time the people could be educated up to the habit of informing the deacon when the physician is called. In every case of sickness a special meeting of as many deacons as can be gotten together, along with the pastor, should be held, and special prayers should be made for the sick.

Then it should be considered the duty of each deacon to labor, exhort and pray with each and every member in his group, until every one forms the habit of laying by in store on the first day of every week, God's just and fair proportion of his income. In some instances it might be well for the deacons to have furnished to each member a small box, or bank, as they are termed, into which the Lord's money should be placed. Then let these offerings be brought to the house of God on Sunday, if weekly services are held, or on whatever

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Sunday the church is in the habit of meeting for worship. It would be well, if, after long and faithful effort on the part of pastor and deacons, there are members who will not conform their lives to this plain scriptural method of conducting the Lord's work, to cite such members to appear before the church and give reasons why they will not so conform their lives. The carrying of a great number of members who will not conform their conduct to the plain teaching of God's Word, as to these matters, is not only a heavy burden and hindrance to the work of the church, but is at the same time an injustice, and a ruinous education to members themselves, for which the church should, and will, be held responsible in the day of Judgment. It ought to be taken for granted that, when the plain teaching of the Word of God has been laid upon the conscience of a man, in the right spirit and in the right way, over and over again, and when all patience and forbearance toward him have been exercised, and he still persists in utter disregard of every admonition—such a man has not the “root of the matter” in him;

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and the sooner he is made to realize his lost condition, the better it is for him. Perhaps the greatest burden borne, and the most prolific source of weakness in all the churches of this time, is the great number of worldly professors of religion who are found within the membership of the churches. The plan of work herein outlined would purge the churches of this class, and, I believe, usher in a great spiritual revival among the Lord's people. It would fill the Lord's treasury with means for every department of the Lord's work; untie the hands of the ministry; fill the earth with missionaries of the Cross, and bring in the better day, for which some have longed and prayed, when the knowledge of God shall have covered the earth.

Of course, it is understood that, to carry forward this work of the deacons, there would have to be stated meetings of the pastor and the deacons, and, frequently, meetings to which all of the men of the church would be invited.

This is God's method. It can only be carried out by Spirit-filled people of God. *But God's work can be done in God's way.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE ORDINANCES.

There were two events in the life and work of Jesus as the Redeemer of mankind, which may be regarded as the culminations or climaxes of His career. The one was His death on the Cross; the other, His burial and resurrection. "He was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification." The two ordinances of the churches were intended to celebrate and commemorate these events, and to symbolize the participation of the Lord's people in the benefits and blessings derived from them. The ordinance of baptism stands at the entrance upon the Christian career. It commemorates the burial and resurrection of the Lord, and symbolizes the spiritual burial of the regenerated, converted sinner to a life of sin, and his resurrection to a new and godly life.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper,

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which the membership of His churches observe from time to time, commemorates the death of Christ, and proclaims the faith of His people in the blessings secured for them by His death, as the one and only source of their sustained spiritual life.

The qualifications of the participants in these two ordinances, are plainly made out by the very nature, purpose and significance of the ordinances themselves. Certainly only those who have died to sin, through regeneration and conversion, should, upon any account, be symbolically buried and raised again in baptism. Rom. 6:4: "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." That is, those who died to sin were buried through baptism. Now this very symbolic significance of baptism just as plainly sets forth the act of baptism, or, as we say, the mode. Sprinkling or pouring misses the one sole significance of the ordinance, and so plainly indicates that those who employ these symbols have no conception, can

have no conception, of the purpose or significance of the rite. So we may say that only those who are baptized by the scriptural baptism, have, or can have, the aim and purpose in the act which alone renders the performance baptism at all.

From the very nature and purpose of the Lord's Supper, it is clear that only those who have personal union with Christ, by a living faith in Him, can possibly participate in the real observance of the ordinance. 1 Corinthians 10:16-21: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we who are many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread." . . . "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." It is plain that only real Christians, therefore, can commune with the "one body"; so that in fact the very nature and purpose of the ordinance limits its observance to saved persons, while the example of Jesus in the institution of the Sup-

per plainly limits it, not only to saved, baptized persons, but to that company of disciples that He had brought into relation with each other, as we have before seen in this book, in church fellowship. Jesus did not invite even his own mother to commune with Him. The Supper was limited to the members of the church. Nothing in the Scriptures is clearer than the fact that the Supper, by its very nature and purpose, and by the example of its founder, is a "*close communion*," as some have been in the habit of referring to it, in terms of disrespect.

All the so-called evangelical denominations of Christians agree, and so state in their confessions of faith, that only baptized persons should come to the Lord's table. Those who hold that either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion is baptism, can, consistently, invite all those who have submitted to any one of these forms, to take part in the celebration of the Supper. Baptists hold that only a believer in Christ who has been baptized (immersed) in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is really baptized; therefore, they, acting

on precisely the same principle, and by the same rule by which others proceed, can invite only baptized (immersed) believers to the Lord's table. So that the difference between Baptists and others is not as to the Supper, but as to baptism. All reasonable persons of other denominations honestly admit that, if they believed as Baptists do concerning baptism, they would practice as Baptists do in reference to the Supper. Let us therefore look a little more closely into the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism. In this matter, there is no better way, perhaps, than to place before my readers every passage of Scripture to be found in the Bible which refers to the matters that are in dispute concerning this ordinance. The following are the questions, concerning baptism, about which denominations of Christians differ:

1. The Subject.
2. The Mode.
3. The Design.

For the convenience of my readers, all the passages found in the Scriptures, referring to baptism, are here arranged un-

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der these three heads, and while, in each case, the full reference is given by book, chapter and verse, only the words of the reference referring directly to the subject, under which they stand, will be quoted.

1. *The Subject*—*That is, Who should be baptized?*

Matthew 18:18-20: “*Teach all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things.*”

Mark 16:15-16: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*”

Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17: “*Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*”

Mark 1:4, 5, 9-11: “*And there went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*”

Luke 3:3, 7, 8, 21, 22: “*Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the*

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wrath to come? *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.*"

Acts 2:37-47: "*Repent and be baptized.*"

"Then *they that gladly received his Word* were baptized."

Acts 8:12, 13: "*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*" "*Then Simon himself believed also, and when he was baptized,*" etc.

Acts 9:17, 18: "*And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*"

Acts 10:44-48: "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as me?*"

Acts 16:13-15: "*Whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized,*" etc.

Acts 16:19-34: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . . and was baptized . . . believing in God with all his house.*"

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Acts 18:8, 25: "Hearing, *believed* and were baptized."

Acts 19:1-5: "Baptized with the baptism of *repentance*."

2. *The Mode: Was it sprinkling, pouring or immersion?*

Matthew 3:6: "And were baptized of him *in Jordan*."

Matthew 3:16: "And Jesus when He was baptized went up *straightway out of the water*."

Mark 1:5: "All baptized of him *in the river of Jordan*."

Mark 1:9, 10: "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan. And *straightway coming up out of the water*."

John 3:23: "And John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salem because there was *much water there*."

Acts 8:38, 39: "And they *went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water*."

Rom. 6:4: "Therefore we are *buried with Him by baptism* into death, that like as

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Christ was *raised up* from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Colossians 11:12: "*Buried* with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him."

3. *The Design of Baptism.*

John 3:6: And were baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins.*"

John 3:15: "Thus it becometh us to *fulfill all righteousness.*"

Mark 1:5: "And were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, *confessing their sins.*"

Luke 3:7, 8: "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him . . . *bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.*"

Acts 2:38: Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ *for (unto) the remission of sins.*"

Acts 10:47: "Can any man forbid water, that these should be baptized, *which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*"

Acts 16:31: "And they said, *Believe on*

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the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved . . . and was baptized."

Acts 22:16: "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins."

Rom. 6:4: "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life."

Gallatians 3:27: "For as many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

It is perhaps unnecessary to say a word as to the obvious teaching of these Scriptures. The mystery is that all Christians do not agree as to these matters. The scriptural subject of baptism is, clearly, a penitent believer in Christ. There is not an intimation that unconscious infants were baptized. Then, perhaps, the ques-

tion will be asked: Why, then, do great denominations of Christians practice the sprinkling of infants, calling it baptism? The answer is that in the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church the doctrine of baptismal salvation gained credence, and since it seemed impossible to immerse little babies, and persons who were sick unto death, sprinkling was substituted for baptism, as a last resort. Then, it always has seemed the duty of Christians to solemnly dedicate their children to God, and since it is easier to take them to the church, and have the minister sprinkle them, than it is to teach and train them, praying with them and for them; and so in heart and life give one's children to God, the easier way has gained credence among many people, even though there is not one word in the Bible to justify such a practice. To be baptized is a duty which one owes to his Lord, and it would seem to be positively sinful for a parent to teach his child that he performed that act of personal obedience for him, before he was sufficiently conscious to understand the nature of it.

As to what baptism is—the mode, as we

say—is even plainer. “Baptized of him in Jordan”; “Up straightway out of the water”; “In the river of Jordan”; “straightway coming up out of the water”; “Because there was much water there”; “And went down, both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water”; “Buried with Him through baptism,” and so on. If we couple with these passages the fact that the meaning of the word *baptize*, which is, properly speaking, a Greek word (*baptizo*) adapted to the English language by a simple change in termination, means “*to dip*,” “*to immerse*,” it would seem still the more remarkable that all Christians are not of one mind in this matter.

Lest there should be some doubt among my readers as to the meaning of this Greek word, I here append the testimony of the best Greek lexicons in the world:

Scapula says: “To dip, to immerse, as we do anything for the purpose of dyeing it.”

Schleusner says: “Properly it signifies to dip, to immerse, to immerse in water.”

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Parkhurst says: "To dip, immerse, or plunge in water."

Stevens says: "To merge, or immerse, to submerge, or bury in water."

Donnegan says: "To immerse repeatedly into liquid, to submerge, to soak thoroughly."

Robinson says: "To immerse, to sink."

Liddell and Scott say: "To dip repeatedly."

Grimm's Lexicon of the New Testament, which stands at the head of Greek lexicography in Europe and America, says: "(1) To dip; (2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging; (3) to overwhelm."

The design of baptism seems equally plain. It is called "the baptism of repentance," because it symbolizes the overwhelming sorrow for sin which leads to repentance. It is a confession of sin, on account of the cleansing nature of the element, water, in which one is baptized. It is a burial, to commemorate the burial and resurrection of our Lord, and to show that one has died to a life of sin, been buried, and raised up to walk in newness of life. It is a commemoration and a symbol.

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It should be said here that all denominations agree that the immersion of a believer in the right way, by the proper administrator, is baptism. Therefore no denomination would have to sacrifice one iota of what they now hold, if they should adopt believer's baptism as the way. So that surely they, not Baptists, are responsible before God, and should be held responsible by men, for the division of the Lord's people, when we come to the Lord's table. If it be claimed that the matter of approaching the table should be left to the individual himself, we declare that the Scriptures plainly commit the administration of the ordinances, with the full prerogative as to who shall participate in their observance, not to the individual, but to the body of the Lord's people. 1 Corinthians 5:11, 12: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them that are without? *Do not ye judge them that are within, . . . there-*

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fore put away from among yourselves that evil person." 1 Corinthians 11:2: "I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (traditions) as I delivered them unto you."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHURCH AND ALL CHRISTIAN WORK.

More and more, of late years, the work of the churches has been encroached upon by other organizations. It is claimed, forsooth, that the churches are not reaching men, and so the Young Men's Christian Associations propose to do it. It is claimed that the churches are not reaching the young people, and so the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor propose to do it. It is claimed that the churches are not reaching the poor, and "unchurched masses," as they are called, and so the Salvation Army proposes to do it. It is supposed that other and different methods than those employed by the churches, must be resorted to, in order to evangelize and Christianize these different classes of people. Then, in addition to these, there must be internal organizations, in the churches themselves, to accomplish this and that

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for the different classes of their own members, and for others. Many of these organizations are interdenominational or undenominational. It is easy for them to be so, for the reason that they subscribe to no creed; they hold to no particular body of doctrine, and exercise no discipline. The terms of admission to membership in them are so meager, and the obligations of membership so inconsequential, that persons find it easy to join and belong to them. All these organizations get their workers, and the means which support them, not from the results of their own work, as a rule, but from the results of the work of the churches. Having little or no creed, little or no discipline, little or no fundamental spiritual qualifications and requirements for membership, they furnish for themselves no solid foundation upon which to rest. It is my deliberate opinion that, but for the work of the churches, they would be compelled to adopt the plan of organization and work pursued by the churches, or they would perish within a few years. Their work being the more spectacular, in a way, brings some of them

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even more prominently before the public than the churches are. Their undenominational, or interdenominational nature, gains for them an advocacy by the secular press which cannot be accorded to any denominational enterprise; and sometimes their very success is used by the outsiders against the solid work of the churches, which always has and always will make even their existence possible. This fact sets some of the churches in a hostile attitude to them. But for the fact that God's people are split up into different denominations, the churches could do all this work far better than these undenominational or interdenominational organizations. I am not so sure but each denomination could, separately, do the work better if it would undertake it. The fact is, churches abandon the great downtown and tenement districts of the cities to the Salvation Army, and to the Young Men's Christian Associations, whereas they should put forth their most earnest efforts in these districts. God's people cannot do their work by proxy. If the very best and most cultivated people of God do not show that they

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are willing to place themselves in personal contact, with the masses of men who belong to the toiling tenants of the land, the cause they represent will die on their hands. If all the Baptist churches in a given city, for instance, would unite in the support of great downtown interests, where the gospel is preached and where Christian work is done, the problem could be solved, and I am not sure that it ever can be solved, or ought to be solved, in any other way.

I submit that there is no Christian work beneath the stars which cannot be better done by a New Testament church, or churches, than by any other organization. This is true for the following reasons. *a.* The terms of admission into the membership of a New Testament church are regeneration, conversion and baptism. These terms of admission, along with the disciplinary power with which the church is endowed, are necessary to preserve the character and standing which any Christian organization must maintain in order to do effective, permanent good in any community. *b.* The financial management of

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a church of Christ, if it be a New Testament church, devolves upon its deacons, which is a guarantee of safe and honorable management. *c.* No Christian organization ought to exist in the world, except to propound, exemplify, and teach a definite body of doctrine.

Again, the tendency of these extra-church organizations is, and has been, to break down denominational lines, and to teach our Baptist young people especially, that one might just as well be anything else as to be a Baptist. First came the Sunday school, which for years was considered something different from the church, and an organization in itself—these independent organizations forming alliances with similar organizations of other denominations—then the Young People's organizations, and so on. These entered into alliances which the churches, as churches, never would have thought of forming, for the reason that it would have compromised their doctrine. Now, let it be understood that it is not out of any animosity to other denominations that I am saying these things; but I do most sincerely hold that

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the permanent, lasting Christian work of the ages has been done by each denomination sticking to its own work, in its own way, according as it, at least believed it was following out, to the letter, the teaching of the Word of God as to the way of doing the Lord's work, and not by a conglomeration of persons holding dissimilar views of doctrines and methods of work. So in the future the people who hold to the "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism," will possess, and they only will possess, that solidarity of organization and fellowship which will render them effective workers together in carrying to successful consummation the work of Christ's kingdom in the world. Oneness of faith necessarily comes before oneness of task. *One "Lord," one "Faith"*—and then comes the *One "Baptism."*

So we take it that a New Testament church which, in organization and service, measures up to the New Testament standard, with its officers, discipline and doctrine, is the one organization on earth which, in co-operation with other like or-

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ganizations, is best prepared to do all the work of Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHURCH A BROTHERHOOD.

Through all the ages mankind has felt the need of a real brotherhood which includes a larger circle than that of the single family. The success and happiness of the individual are so linked up with the general good, that each and every thoughtful person realizes that his own welfare depends largely upon the welfare of his fellow men who are about him. Then, the best impulses of the human soul lead good men to desire to share whatever good they enjoy for themselves, with those about them, and who may not be members of their own individual households. These, with other sentiments and principles, have led the people of all times to form fraternities, emphasizing, in turn, different phases of human need and pleasure. All these organizations have failed to supply these innate necessities and desires, for certain

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plain and obvious reasons. In order to be a real brotherhood, one which is something more than a mere name, there must be a common parentage and similar sentiments, tastes and ambitions. People of dissimilar natures, etc., may meet together; may enroll their names upon a membership roll in the same column, but they form no brotherhood, nor do they enjoy any real fellowship.

The church of Christ presents to the human race the only possible real brotherhood among men. It provides for a common birth into a real family—the family of God. It presents the ideal fraternal nature, spirit and life, in the character, life, and labor of Jesus Christ, the Elder Brother in the divine family. It presents the only plan of organization upon which it is at all possible to constitute a permanent brotherhood of mankind, on the larger scale. The real scriptural terms of membership in a church of Christ, are a change of mind and character, and the fashioning of each life by the common standard of the life of the Son of God. Regeneration and conversion make men of every race and

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country alike in the main features of their character; and under the sway of the power of this blessed life, men of all races and conditions of circumstances acknowledge a real spiritual kinship which sometimes proves itself to be stronger than even the ties of the family itself. Then these scriptural terms of membership in a church of Christ, if they be strictly adhered to, protect the brotherhood from that maladministration which so often dries up the springs of benevolence, and cripples and destroys so many human fraternities, which maintain no real standard of initiation into their membership, except, perhaps, a financial one. The finances of a church, if it be a real New Testament church, are handled by deacons who are chosen to their office because they stand out among their brethren on account of their integrity. And so the very plan of organization provides for so safeguarding the finances as to preserve confidence and credit. The spirit of brotherly love and devotion, a common ideal, with common character, aims, and purposes of life, constitute a New Testament church of

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Christ the only real brotherhood among men. The "love of the brethren" is considered and held to be the chief characteristic of the true Christian, and the very best evidence to himself that he is a real member of the heavenly family. From the very beginning of Christian churches, they have, after all, evinced a more enduring, vitalized character than any and all other organizations among men. This is true because of the very matters here mentioned. The brotherhood in Christ Jesus rests upon a fellowship of character and the bonds of love. I do not claim that this fellowship of the Lord's people is always and everywhere up to the standard. The people of God have often allowed other fraternities to divide their thought and interest for a time; but as they come up against the real trials of life, if they are real Christians, their minds and hearts turn to the sweet and blessed fellowship of their brethren in Christ.

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

CHAPTER XV.

AN APPEAL TO PASTORS.

Dear Brethren :

You are the called and ordained leaders of the churches of which you are pastors. Your calling is the most divine and sacred of all the avocations of men. The churches will never rise higher than the standards that you set for them. Your business is to *preach the Word*. God's plans for doing His work are laid in the nature of things. You can do God's work, only in His way. You may try it in some other way, but the working of all God's creation will combine to defeat you. You are "thoroughly furnished to every good work," by the Book itself. You will do well to consult the Book for direction, not only as to what you are to preach, but also as to how you are to lead the flock. Not all the minute details of church work are laid down in the Bible, but there is a clear outline of church

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organization and work in the New Testament. If you are pastor of what is now regarded as an *up-to-date church*, I have no doubt that you have often realized that much of the time and strength you should have put into prayer and the preaching of the Word, you have been compelled to devote to the extra-organizations in your church, keeping the intricate machine oiled, as we say, and in running order. Your time has been taken up with financial matters. You have been crippled. I beg of you to begin today, to go back to the simplicity of New Testament church organization and work. Call your deacons together. Open your heart to them. If they are not the very men, of all the men in your church, who come nearest to possessing the scriptural qualifications of deacon, seek to have others set part to the blessed office. Unify the church. Have one treasury and one treasurer. Seek to have all contribute in the same way, to the same things, at the same time. Try God's plans. Hold frequent conferences with your deacons. Take an interest in the Sunday School—the teaching service of the

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church: you are responsible for what is taught there. If there are difficulties on your field, work them out. Some one must do it. Be brave. Don't give up. Trust in God. His Word will not return unto Him void. "Be thou faithful in all things." Your calling is high and your ministry demanded. Your power with God and with men will depend upon what you are, far more than upon what you say. What you are will depend upon what you receive, and what you receive will depend upon earnest prayer. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

CHAPTER XVI.

AN APPEAL TO DEACONS.

My Beloved Brethren:

You are men of God. You have been chosen by your brethren to one of the two offices of the churches of Christ. Your brethren singled you out, chose, and ordained you to this sacred office, by reason of special confidence they had in you, and the special esteem in which you were held. The purpose contemplated by the creation of your office in the churches, was the management of the business of the church. The inspired Apostles created the office and ordained the first deacons. You belong to a worthy line, at the head of which stands the faithful Stephen, the first martyr to the cause of his risen Lord. The work of the minister, the pastor, has not always been done as well as it should have been done, but I submit, with all sincerity, that your part of the Lord's work has

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fallen far below that of the pastor, in carrying forward the work of our Lord. You have allowed the treasury of the Lord to run empty. You have allowed the cause of Christ to be brought into disrepute. You have attended to your own business affairs, while you have neglected the house of your God. You have turned over, in many instances, far too many, the finances of the churches to the pastor, and crippled his ministry. You have allowed the minister's support to be cut down to the starvation point, and thus driven men called of God to preach, to turn part of their attention to secular affairs. You are not altogether to be blamed. Pastors have often been a party to the taking of your work out of your hands. The churches, in many places, have ignored you and taken your work and placed it in the hands of women and young people. You have not been honored as your place and your service demanded; but you and your work are the hope of the churches, along the lines where the cause of Christ is suffering most. I appeal to you, in the name of Jesus. The doors of heathen nations are

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all open to receive the missionary. Our own beloved nation is over-run by foreigners who are not favorable to our own Christian institutions. Your pastors are, in many instances, poorly and irregularly paid. The treasury of the Lord is empty. I repeat what I have said before: Our churches need intelligent, consecrated, efficient leadership in financial matters. You alone can, and should be, the leaders in these matters. Will you do it? You must do it. Your Master calls you; His bleeding cause calls you; perishing souls call you; broken-hearted pastors call you. Will you heed these calls? Brother Deacon, you are the one to take the initiative. Call your brother deacons together. Pray together. Plan together. Exhort and entreat your brethren and sisters to adopt the Bible plan of laying by them in store on the first day of every week as God hath prospered them. Go trusting in God, with His Word in your hands and His love in your heart. You can revolutionize the affairs of the Kingdom. Despise not the day of small things. Get two, get ten, get one hundred, of the members of your

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church to give at least one-tenth of their income to save a lost world. Get them to do this regularly, systematically—and you will purchase to yourself “a good degree, and great boldness in the faith”; and your Lord will open heaven to you and stand to receive your departing spirit as He did that of the dying Stephen.

THE END.

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